

Jeannie's Corner on Convention

June 18, 2006

Because of the leadership of Phoebe Griswold, the Bishop's Spouses have become a strong support group for each other and for the bishops. Our theme, or mission statement, comes from the theologian Walter Brueggemann, who describes true Christian community as one that is marked by "uncommon gentleness, hurts noticed, and large dreams entertained." We, as the spouses group, work at living this out in our own community.

At this General Convention, the Spouses did something new for us: a service project day. Mary Ann Price, our host in The Diocese of Southern Ohio, arranged for us to work in an inner-city parish here in Columbus. There were well over sixty of us that participated in projects ranging from clearing weeds from an overgrown yard belonging to an older person, and cleaning the house, to leading a bible study and sharing time, to setting up and offering a carnival for the children in the neighborhood, to finally cooking and serving dinner to over 150 neighbors and members of the church. It was a wonderful day, and, we all thought we would be going to help the people there. Instead, I believe we came away with so much more than we gave.

We also had a tribute luncheon honoring Phoebe Griswold, because, of course, she is retiring from the "House of Spouse" when her husband Frank retires as Presiding Bishop. Phoebe has always been keenly aware of and interested in women's issues, not only at home, but all over the world. In their travels, she has met with women in Africa, who were not able to go to school because they spent the majority of their day getting water and firewood for their family, sometimes getting up way before dawn to travel great distances for water. She has met with women in the Middle East who have lost most or all of their children due to war and violence. She has participated in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women through the Office of Women's Ministries of the Episcopal Church.

Because of her passion about these issues, the Bishop's Spouses set up the "Phoebe Griswold Scholarship Fund" to provide money to women throughout the United States and the world for education and advancement. The fund already has over \$18,000, and it was only launched about a month ago. Needless to say, she was quite surprised and thrilled.

For those interested, I am returning to our Diocese with a short film entitled "Shall We Gather: Anglican Women Together" documenting the 49th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women who put their faith into action. It will be available to you through the Resource Center in the Diocesan House.

Today, the House of Bishops is cloistered and will be electing a new Presiding Bishop. This is a very exciting day! Again, thank you for your prayers.

Faithfully,

Jeannie